

one. "It was all very democratic," commented one UMass official. "Elliott Richardson and Congressman O'Neil and the rest of them were wandering around from place to place just like everybody else."

The mass confusion was seen by all participants from their own viewpoints.

At the Record, a corner of the front page of the Sunday paper was being held open for a synopsis of the address to be given by former Atty. Gen. Elliott Richardson. As originally planned, Richardson was to have begun speaking at about 11. By pushing hard, we could have covered the speech without too much difficulty.

Photographs were a problem. Against all her professional instincts, prize-winning Record photographer Karen Waggoner had gamely agreed to take Polaroid pictures, since there was no time to process film from what she regards as a "real" camera.

Calling in early Saturday to report the change in plans, she also informed the publisher that she had just gone through the agony of shooting photographer Ansel Adams, an honorary degree recipient, with the office Polaroid.

Meanwhile, back at Boyden, events were taking a decidedly unpleasant turn.

"I've never seen a crowd turn ugly so fast," observed one UMass functionary.

Part of the problem was that parents were fainting in the balcony. Another was that there just wasn't room for everybody. Some families, having slogged through the mud all over campus and following signs as in a bizarre treasure hunt, located Boyden only to be turned away.

They remained unconvinced about lack of room despite the semi-conscious parents being hauled out past them.

One unverified report has somebody's elderly mother screaming at Chancellor Randolph Bromery, another has Pres. Robert Wood being threatened bodily harm by an umbrella-wielding parent. In short, it rapidly became obvious that this just wasn't going to work.

The decision that, hot or cold, it was going out on the field, was made by Wood. Starting time was further delayed until noon. Reporters from all over the state saw deadlines slipping away from them.

Many papers were covering commencement mainly because a press conference with Richardson had been scheduled for after the ceremonies. This was the first thing to go, since Richardson had a plane to catch. The probing questions remained tucked in pockets.

No honored guest was heard to curse aloud.

On Monday, several persons commented on the persevering good humor of Msgr. David Power of the Newman Center, whose wheelchair kept getting stuck in the mud. He was "on leave" from his bed at Providence Hospital to receive an honorary degree. Attempts to move him gingerly turned into a fervent hope that he could be carted from place to place in one piece.

At noon, when the procession began, a number of reporters realized that their ballpoint pens did not contain indelible ink. Notes were washed away.

I don't know how Elliott Richardson's

(continued on page 3)

# 'Kendrick park' abounds in old town names

**EDITORS NOTE**—The following story is the second of a three part series detailing the history of a triangular "island" bordered by North and East Pleasant and Triangle Streets, and the intentions of the Kendrick Trust to turn the land into a public park. The final installment will appear in Sunday's Record, giving the political reaction to present plans and proposals for the "island."

By ROBERT BLOSSOM

Old yankee names like Hannah Wedge, Morton Dickinson, Moses Bascom, Isaac Guernsey Cutler and Enoch Whiting litter the history of a 3.3 acre site bounded by North and East Pleasant and Triangle Streets which will eventually be called Kendrick Park.

The Park was conceived by George S. Kendrick, who set up a trust fund intended to purchase houses on the "island" as they came up for sale.

Only three houses remain that don't belong to the trust, although there is speculation that the trust is deteriorating and may not have the funds to complete the project (See Amherst Record June 2).

In a masters thesis for the UMass School of Landscape Architecture, Patricia Bischoff, 72 Dana Street, has outlined in detail the history of the site, which has undergone many dramatic changes over the years.

The Bischoff thesis outlines the history of the site chronologically.

1772-1832. Triangle Street was called "Country Road" at the time and East Pleasant was referred to as the "West Highway." North Pleasant Street was not yet built.

A minor historical footnote occurred on the island when General Benjamin Lincoln from Springfield spent the night on the "island" after dispersing Daniel Shays' men in Petersham, during the time of the famous Shays' rebellion.

After 1800 several houses were built facing the "West Highway" (East Pleasant Street). All properties were bounded by a farm on the west owned by Dr. Rufus Cowles. His house still stands perpendicular to Cowles Lane (formerly Maple Street).

The southern part of the "island" belonged to a physician, Isaac Guernsey Cutler who sold the property in 1816 to Enoch Whiting and in 1826 another parcel to Abraham Howe.

Howe later became the proprietor for 22 years of the Amherst House.

1833-1855. Tan Brook received its name when two tanners Enoch Whiting and Ezekiel Bellows lived on the "island." Bellows lived in a magnificent old Colonial saltbox that was torn down in 1879.

1856-1859. During this period no new houses were added to the "island" facing "Country Road." However, the most significant physical changes took place during this time.

In September 1858, Leavitt Hallock, who purchased the Cowles farm from

Osymn Baker, brought before the County Commission a petition that "the public convenience requires a new highway between the highway near the house of Horace Henderson and the highway near the house of Morton Dickinson.

The next month the commission met at the Howes house to view the premises and to hear the property owners involved.

The commission decided to build the new road (North Pleasant Street) and awarded the following land damages to the property owners: Horace Henderson, \$8; Widow Sarah Needham, \$175; Luke Sweetser, \$75; and Leavitt Hallock, \$34.

The commission of the County Commission by the first day of July A.D. 1859."

1860-1872. Kendrick himself was born on August 23, 1845. During the historical period of 1860-1872 he was working in the U.S. Arsenal at Springfield. He moved to Amherst in 1865 then moved to Boston

where he lived for two years. Upon the death of his father he returned to Amherst to run a meat and provisions store on South Pleasant Street, or "Merchants Row." In 1869 he married Miss Matilda F. Fowler.

Kendrick's sister Jenny was born in 1862, and she lived on Northampton Road with her father, B.F. Kendrick whose estate was later developed into Kendrick Place.

Meanwhile, several houses were built on the island, including the home of Dwight W. Palmer, who built his house around 1863. Palmer was instrumental in bringing gas, electricity, and water to Amherst, was a trustee of the Amherst Savings Bank, president of the Oliver Smith Charities for six years, a selectman and owner of the Palmer Block which housed an opera house.

It was during this period that six dwellings and a Catholic Church were built to the west of the "island." (See pictures).

1873-1885. During this period much

activity occurred on the "island", including the razing of one home, removal of another and the construction of two dwellings.

In 1880 the First Baptist Church Society purchased the lot of Hannah Wedge. The same year H.D. Fearing, who lived at the corner of Fearing and North Pleasant, offered his home to the Baptist Church to be placed on their new lot, and to be used as a parsonage, if the church would remove it and do grading around his new dwelling.

1886-1909. During this period Kendrick and his wife lived at 6 School St. Later the street name was changed to Hit-

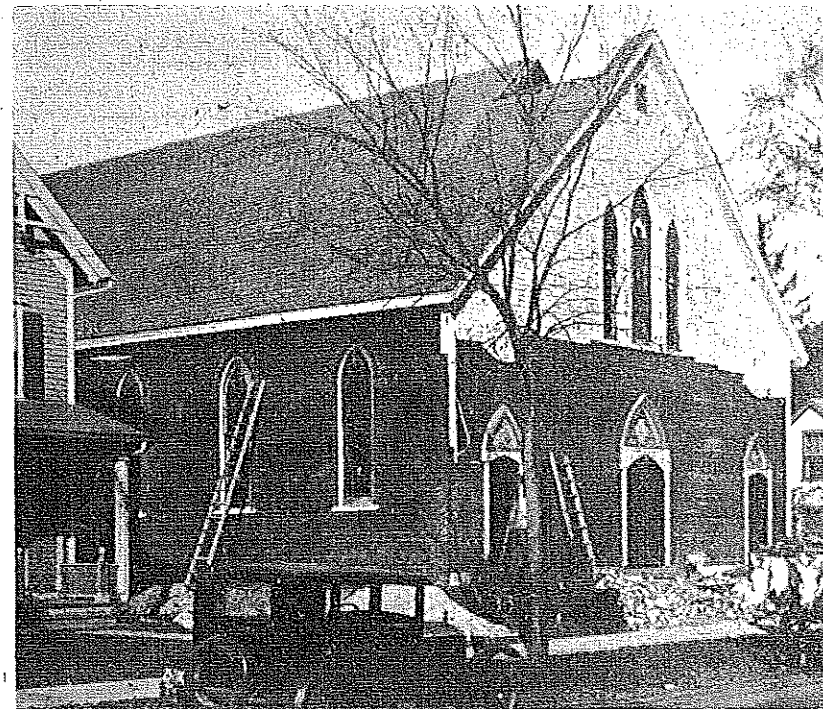
chock and is now Seelye Street. The house they lived in at 22 Seelye St. is now owned by Robert Fischer.

By 1909 there were ten houses on the "island."

One of the houses belonged to John P. Henry's grandfather. Henry was drafted as a catcher for the Washington Athletics in 1910, thus becoming Amherst's only professional baseball player.

1910-1929. It was during this time that Kendrick conceived of the idea of Kendrick Park. From 1917 until 1929, he served as president of the Amherst

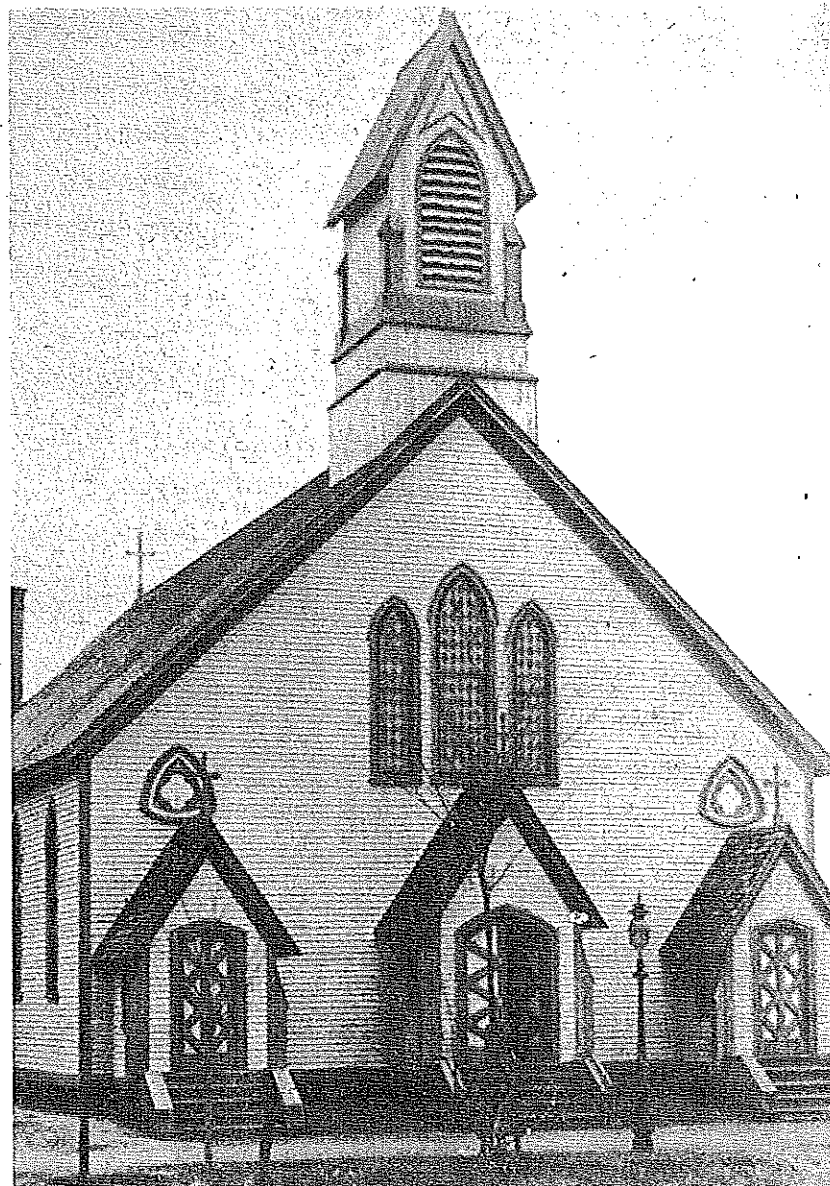
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CATHOLIC CHURCH being converted to Cathedral Apartments in 1927. The old church was just west of the "island."



CATHEDRAL apartments in 1974. The apartments are not included in the proposed Kendrick Park since they are off the "Island" and on the west side of North Pleasant Street.



THE CATHOLIC Church about 1890, before any changes were made.

Amherst Record  
June 5, 1974

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# Rich history of 'Island' shown

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Savings Bank.

As of 1910 Tan Brook no longer meandered across the "island." The town hired engineer Henry Ufford to place the brook into a stone tunnel from McClellan Street to the east side of Pleasant Street.

During this time the final house was built on the "island" in 1913. The house was built as a home for himself by Edwin D. Bosworth.

Bosworth and his father built, in addition to his "island" home, the Davenport Inn (now Zeta Nu fraternity), the Kendrick house (now the Fischer home) on Seelye Street, in addition to many homes on Lincoln Avenue.

1930-1974. Kendrick died at the age of 85, a childless widower. His sister Jenny, whose will was identical to her brother's, lived on until 1957. Nevertheless, the execution of the trust began as early as 1937, and there is some speculation that it began as early as 1931.

To date, the trust has acquired all except three of the houses of the original 11 on the "island."

In her thesis Bischoff strongly recommends that none of the three remaining houses be destroyed. She points out specifically that the Dudley house at 275 North Pleasant has both historical and aesthetic significance.

She recommends further that the cellar holes, all made from native stones, be incorporated into the park design where possible rock gardens and resting spots could be constructed.

Thomas Quarles, of the trust department at the First National Savings Bank of Amherst, which is in charge of the Kendrick Trust, was mildly skeptical about moving the existent houses. "We tried that route two years ago before the Sam Hyde house (285 North Pleasant St.) was razed," he said.

According to Quarles the trust consulted the Amherst Historical Society and was told by them that the house was of no historical importance to the town. "A party in Hadley was interested in the place," Quarles said.

However, a firm in Brimfield, which

specializes in moving houses, told the trust department that removal of the house anywhere outside the immediate area would be economically unfeasible.

In her thesis Bischoff recommends that the houses be moved to suitable lots (if they are available) on Lincoln Avenue, Northampton Road and East Pleasant Street.

In another recommendation, Bischoff suggests that the Tan Brook be "reopened" and that a small flood storage pond be created on the island for visual benefit in the area.

She points out that originally the brook meandered across the "island" and was called Wolfpitt Brook, named in hopes of receiving a bounty paid by the Commonwealth and the town for each dead wolf.

The name of the brook was changed when in 1816 wolf trappers gave way to tanners Whiting and Bellows. The brook was placed underground in 1910.

The planning office agrees that Bischoff's suggestion is correct both in aesthetic terms and in terms of flood control in the area. Assistant planner Dale Cope told the Record this week, "If the stream were placed above ground again the land around the stream would act as a blotter during times of flooding."

In the recent past there have been several instances where the underground conduit has been incapable of accommodating the water flow during times of flooding.

Sometimes the result has been serious damage to cellars in the area. One such time was the extensive damage caused in the basement of the Sam Hyde house in July 1972. In December of the same year, the house was razed.

The brook originates in a small pond north of Strong Street, flows south and east beneath the island, then north to University Pond, into the Mill River and then terminates in the Connecticut.

In a definitive study of the brook's course done by Town Engineer James Smith, entitled, "Tan Brook, A Case Hydrologic Study of an Urban Watershed," much the same recommendations are made.

Smith says, "A conservation area such as this in close proximity to the

town center would be extremely convenient for the town's in-town elderly, and should include foot paths designed with particular needs of the elderly in mind."

Smith also points out that the urban area from Triangle Street to McClellan is susceptible to high cost flood damages from storm drainage overflow, and that any plans for modification of the Tan Brook system should provide the area with a high degree of flood damage protection.

In addition to the history of the site, the Bischoff thesis also analyzes the vegetation, traffic, and utilities on the present site and makes extensive recommendations for the actual landscaping of the eventual park.

The next article on the park will present official reaction to the idea, how it implements the SCOG report, and a detailed description of Bischoff's recommendations.

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